

March 12, 2007

Phyllis Powell, Manager
Certificate of Need Unit
Div. of Licensing and Regulatory Services
DHHS, SIIS 11
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

**RE: CMMC Emergency Department Renovation and Expansion Project
Letter of Intent**

Dear Ms. Powell:

Pleased be advised that Central Maine Medical Center plans to renovate and expand the existing Emergency Department on the hospital campus.

The estimated capital cost of this project is \$13,875,000 and the estimated third year incremental operating costs are \$1,610,648. If required, a Certificate of Need Application would be submitted in December 2007.

We are anticipating some 51,000 visits to the CMMC Emergency Department this fiscal year. The current Emergency Department is undersized for this volume of patients and is overdue for a major renovation and expansion.

CMMC's existing 17,600 square foot Emergency Department opened in 1990 in a space designed to accommodate 25,000 visits. Based on today's volume of patients alone, the recommended space should be some 26,000-35,000 square feet. Not only is the physical space too small, there are multiple operational issues associated with the current design including: poor patient flow, a lack of patient privacy, limited isolation capabilities, undersized trauma rooms, inadequate number of chest pain center beds and a host of other issues.

Central Maine Medical Center is one of three tertiary medical centers in Maine. We serve a population base of some 400,000 people who reside in the central, western and coastal regions of this state.

CMMC was designated a Trauma Center in 1994 by Maine EMS. We are now admitting approximately 900 trauma patients. Most of these patients are transported to the CMMC Emergency Department by ground ambulance or LifeFlight of Maine. One of

LifeFlight's two helicopters is based on the CMMC campus directly across from the CMMC Emergency Department, thus saving precious minutes in transporting the most critically injured and ill patients to this location for definitive care. CMMC was verified as a Level II Trauma Center by the American College of Surgeons in 2006.

CMMC's cardiac surgery center opened in May 2003. CMMC has been committed to providing emergency cardiac angioplasty since the inception of this program. Our ED physicians and cardiac nurses have taken a leadership role in training EMS providers to interpret EKGs, thus identifying heart attacks in progress in the pre-hospital environment (at the call scene). This training proven by subsequent QI review of the EMS EKG interpretations, has resulted in six EMS squads being granted the responsibility to activate our cath lab team directly from the field in those instances where a patient is having a heart attack. Four more EMS squads are being similarly trained to receive this privilege at some future date. Because of this training initiative and our long-standing commitment to offer emergency angioplasty as the first choice in the treatment of heart attacks, the Maine Quality Forum has recognized that CMMC has the best "door to balloon" times of any cardiac center in Maine. Additionally, our ED features a very busy Chest Pain Center and the only center in Maine accredited by the Society of Chest Pain Centers.

As a result of CMMC commitment to cardiac care in general and emergency cardiac angioplasty in particular, we have experienced a marked increase in the number of patients presenting to the CMMC Emergency Department with a cardiac diagnosis. There were 408 cardiac visits during the first quarter of this fiscal year as compared to 291 just a year ago – a 40% increase in one year. We are anticipating continued growth as the Maine Quality Forum's "In a Heartbeat" project and other community education initiatives are encouraging Mainers to call 911 at the first sign of a heart attack. Increased cardiac visits to the ED would be a good sign that our collective educational efforts are working, but at the same time add more stress on our already overtaxed ED.

CMMC also houses one of the three Regional Resources Centers for Emergency Preparedness and will play a critical role in the State's response to a natural disaster, a pandemic illness or an act of terrorism.

We respectfully request a ruling from the Department as to the applicability of the Certificate of Need Program to this proposed project.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck Gill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Chuck Gill
Vice-President for Public Affairs